

4. AN UNUSUAL ROOST CHOICE BY THE INDIAN SHORT-NOSED FRUIT BAT, *CYNOPTERUS SPHINX GANGETICUS* (ANDERSON)

(With a plate)

Two sub-species of *Cynopterus sphinx* have been recognised by Hill (1983). These are *C.s. sphinx* (Vahl) and *C.s. gangeticus* (Anderson). Not only are there some morphological differences between these two sub-species (*C. s. sphinx* being much smaller in size than *C. s. gangeticus*), but they occur in different geographical localities. The former occurs in peninsular India while the latter in central and northern India. Both species are essentially arboreal, but there seems to be some difference between the two species regarding their adaptability to new roosting sites. *C.s. sphinx* has a variety of roosting sites such as 'tents' made among the dried drooping fronds, within the drooping clusters of strings of flowers and fruits of palm trees (Kitur palm) (Bhat and Kunz 1993), inside the foliage of creeper plants (Balasingh *et al.* 1993) and under the eaves of windows of large buildings. However, *C.s. gangeticus* does not normally roost anywhere except within the space amidst drooping dried fronds of palm trees in groups of 10 to 25 individuals. The bats fly away and take temporary refuge elsewhere only when the roost is disturbed.

Our attention was drawn to two groups of *C.s. gangeticus* roosting on the main stem of an Ashoka tree (*Saraca asoka*). One group had seven individuals and the other five. In both groups the bats were clustered closely together and were deposited in such a manner that they formed nearly a circle with their heads towards the center of the circle (Plate 1). The thick foliage of Ashoka tree hid them from all sides except from below, and hence they escaped being spotted by crows, kites etc. The fact that these groups were noticed in the same place for several days suggests that *C.s. gangeticus* adopts thickly foliated Ashoka tree for new roosts occasionally. The close huddling of the bats in such a location is, probably, an adaptation to conserve heat.

The photographs were taken for us by Mr. Vilas Mangrulkar to whom we are thankful.

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S.G. VASISHTA
N. BADWAIK

Department of Zoology, Institute of Science, Nagpur 440 001.

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5. NOTE ON THE BREEDING PERIOD OF PAINTED BAT (*KERIVOULA PICTA*)

Two live specimens of bright orange coloured bats were brought to the Kerala Forest Research Institute on August 26, 1993, for identification. The bats were captured locally from a banana plantation at Kannara, Trichur District, Kerala State. The bats were identified as *Kerivoula picta*, the painted bat. Roberts (1986) had reported this species as living among the dry leaves of *longan* tree (*Nephelium longana* — Sapindaceae). The present sighting of the bat among the dry leaves of banana and their resting posture merge very much with the environment of the bright yellowish and dry banana leaves. What is interesting is that the bat were a pair and the

female had a small young one clinging on to its abdomen. Though this species is widespread in distribution, Prater (1965) recorded that there is no information on the breeding habits of the animal. Present observation of a mother with a young, gives some indication on the breeding period of the species.

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K.K. RAMACHANDRAN
E.A. JAYSON

Division of Wildlife Biology, Kerala Forest Research Institute, Peechi 680 653.

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